



**Weekly Wire**  
**East Asia and Pacific**  
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**AUSTRALIA: Areas for National Research Priorities**

The Australian Research Committee has announced the areas of immediate and critical importance to Australia where the government

Strategic Research Priorities will be placed. The areas are: living in a changing environment; promoting population health and wellbeing; managing our food and water assets; securing Australia's place in a changing world; and raising productivity and economic growth.

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/Pages/StrategicResearchPriorities.aspx>



**JAPAN: Academic Year Unchanged**

The University of Tokyo has decided not to implement their long-nurtured plan of starting the academic year in September. They will, instead, introduce a "four-semesters-per-year" system: April-May, September-October, November-December, and January-February, which still allows foreign students to be enrolled in September and Japanese students to attend summer school overseas. The University concluded that it is difficult to change the current academic year for various reasons including the inflexible dates for national medical, nursing, bar, and government employee exams, and opinions that the 6-month gap term after graduating from high school before joining university may be too long a dormant period for the students.

[Translation of NHK news & Nikkei article-June 19, 2013](#)

**JAPAN: Strategic Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Budget-making Committee**

The Strategic STI budget-making committee was officially set up and its first meeting was held on June 20, chaired by STI Minister Yamamoto and included policy-making-level representatives from



STI-related ministries and agencies. All the STI-related ministries and agencies presented their JFY2014 STI budget plans. It was the first time in history that the ministries and agencies gathered to share their preliminary plans for the next year's budget at such an early stage of budget-making process, which allows plenty of time for discussions among the STI-related ministries to develop a focused STI budget without duplication among the ministries, and for consultations with the Ministry of

Finance. A draft government budget will be proposed to the Diet at the end of December 2013.

[Translation of an online event: STI Minister's press conference after the meeting – June 20, 2013](#)

**KOREA: Two Universities Ranked in Top Three**

Two Korean universities are in the top three in the Times Higher Education world ranking of 100 universities-2013 that are 50 years old or younger. At the top on the list is Pohang University of Science and Technology, and third from the top is the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/06/19/the-worlds-best-new-universities-2013/>  
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2013/one-hundred-under-fifty>  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/19/education-university-rankings-idUSL2N0EU1HZ20130619>

**NEW ZEALAND: First carboNZero Zoo**

Wellington Zoo is the first zoo in the world to achieve carboNZero Certification, making it a global leader in sustainability and care for the environment. A carboNZero Certified organization has measured its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and understands their impact on the global climate. They then make a commitment to managing and reducing their GHG emission by creating an emissions management and reduction plan. Any remaining emissions that the organization cannot avoid are offset by purchasing verified carbon credits.

<http://www.wellingtonzoo.com/net/news/article.aspx?id=355>